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Message Text

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DOD/ISA:MR. BADER (SUBSTANCE)
- STANCE)
---------- 058786
R 180035Z JUN 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, SA, ET
SUBJECT: SAUDI INQUIRY ABOUT ADVISABILITY OF AID TO
ETHIOPIA

REF: (A) STATE 90234 (B) JIDDA 3085

1. FOLLOWING IS UPDATE ON INTERNAL SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA WHICH POST CAN DRAW UPON IN DISCUSSIONS WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS: PRIME MINISTER ENDALKATCHEW MAKONNEN'S POLITICAL SKILLS HAVE ENABLED HIM, SO FAR AT LEAST, TO SURMOUNT REPEATED CHALLENGES AND TO MAINTAIN HIS POSITION IN SPITE OF CONTINUING DISSATISFACTION BY THE MORE REFORMIST ELEMENTS IN ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY. HE AND OTHER CONSERVATIVES (NOBLES AND SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS) ARE VYING WITH REFORMERS (JUNIOR TO MIDDLE-RANK OFFICERS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND LABOR UNION LEADERS) FOR CONTROL OF THE MILITARY. AT THE MOMENT SOME OF THE MOMENTUM SEEMS TO HAVE PASSED FROM THE REFORMERS TO THE CONSERVATIVES, BUT THIS COULD QUICKLY CHANGE. RECENTLY ENDALKATCHEW HAS BEEN ASSIGNING OFFICERS WHOM HE RE-
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GARDS AS TRUSTWORTHY TO KEY MILITARY POSITIONS. THE MULTI-

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PLE FISSURES WITHIN THE MILITARY--CLASS, ETHNIC, IDEOLOGI-
CAL, INTERSERVICE--MAKE IT SUSCEPTIBLE TO MANIPULATION.
WHETHER CONSERVATIVES OR REFORMERS WIN OUT, THE MILITARY
WILL BE THE GUARANTORS OF ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT, EITHER AS
OUTSIDE ARBITERS OR AS DIRECT PARTICIPANTS.

2. A CONSERVATIVE RETENTION OF POWER WOULD ENTAIL OUTWARD

POLITICAL REFORM (A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY, WITH POWER
VESTED IN A PRIME MINISTER, RESPONSIBLE TO A PARLIAMENT
COMPOSED OF SUPPORTERS OF THE TRADITIONAL ORDER) BUT
NO FUNDAMENTAL LAND REFORM AND HENCE NO REAL SHIFT OF
POLITICAL POWER. REFORMERS, WHO SEEK MORE BROADLY
BASED PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT AND BONA FIDE LAND REFORM,
WILL KEEP UP THE PRESSURE, AND A CONSERVATIVE REGIME
WOULD BE HARD PUT TO STAY AHEAD OF THEIR DEMANDS. IF
NO VISIBLE PROGRESS IS MADE IN THE PRIMARY REFORMIST
GOALS (PUNISHMENT OF CORRUPT FORMER OFFICIALS AND
LAND REFORM), OR IF IT IS FELT THAT THE ENDALKATCHEW
GOVERNMENT, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE EMPEROR, IS
ACTIVELY DRAGGING ITS FEET ON REFORMS, A DETERMINED
CONFRONTATION IS LIKELY TO RESULT BETWEEN CONSERVATIVES
ON ONE SIDE AND A MODERATE/RADICAL COALITION ON THE
OTHER. SUCH A CONFRONTATION COULD USHER IN A DISTINCTLY
RADICAL REGIME. SOME INTERNAL POLITICAL TURMOIL IS
THEREFORE LIKELY TO CONTINUE INDEFINITELY, AND WILL BE
AGGRAVATED BY ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

3. EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE'S HEALTH CONTINUES TO BE GOOD,
AND HE CAN REMAIN ON THE THRONE IN A MORE OR LESS
FIGUREHEAD CAPACITY AS LONG AS HE DESIRES. HE SHOWS
NO SIGNS OF WISHING TO GIVE UP THE THRONE, AND HE IS
STILL HIGHLY REGARDED BY LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN
POPULATION. SHOULD HE REFUSE THE ROLE OF MONARCH, HE
MAY BE REPLACED BY A MORE MALLEABLE DESCENDANT
(PROBABLY HIS GRANDSON--ZARA YACOB).

4. EXTREMISTS ON THE RIGHT (ULTRA CONSERVATIVE LANDLORDS)
AND ON THE LEFT (MILITARY RADICALS) HAVE LITTLE
INFLUENCE AT PRESENT, BUT COULD TURN POLITICAL TURMOIL
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TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. THE RADICALS WANT TO ELIMINATE
THE MONARCHY, BUT THE VAST MAJORITY OF ETHIOPIANS,
INCLUDING THE MILITARY, OPPOSE SUCH ACTION. THEY SEE THE
EMPEROR AS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL IN HOLDING THE COUNTRY
TOGETHER AND AVOIDING BLOODSHED AND CIVIL WAR.

5. ENDALKATCHEW'S GOVERNMENT FACES RENEWED PRESSURES
ON THE EMPIRE'S PERIPHERY FROM THE SOMALIS AND THE ELF

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(ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT). WHILE BOTH HAVE SO FAR
LARGELY REFRAINED FROM ACTIVE COMPAIGNING IN THE HOPE
OF A MORE ACCOMMODATING ATTITUDE IN ADDIS ABABA, THEY
WILL ALMOST SURELY ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT TO SOME DEGREE
CURRENT ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL AND MILITARY DISARRAY. THE

SOMALIS HAVE NEW SOVIET ARMS WHICH COULD UPSET THE
CURRENT BALANCE OF POWER IN THE HORN. THE ELF HAS
NEW LIBYAN ARMS AND HAS RECENTLY TAKEN A MORE
ACTIVE TERRORISTIC TURN. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTS
THAT THE ELF IS BECOMING MORE MARXIST OR MAOIST
ORIENTED. INDEPENDENT OR COORDINATED ATTACKS IN ERITREA
AND THE OGADEN ARE POSSIBLE; EITHER WOULD SEVERELY
STRAIN ETHIOPIAN DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES. SOMALI
INTENTIONS MAY BECOME CLEARER AFTER THE FORTHCOMING
OAU SUMMIT MEETING IN MOGADISCIO. CURRENT INDICATIONS
ARE THAT THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY REMAINS OPPOSED TO ANY
INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL EFFORTS TO TAKE OVER ETHIOPIAN
TERRITORY AND WOULD RESIST ATTACKS FROM EITHER SOURCE.

6. RE POSSIBLE SAUDI ASSISTANCE TO IEG,SUGGESTIONS
CONTAINED PARA 5 REF A STILL APPLY. ANOTHER SAUDI
OPTION EXISTS. IEG WISHES TO BUY FOUR TO EIGHT F-5E
AIRCRAFT, BUT CURRENT DELIVERY LEAD TIME IS 24 MONTHS.
SINCE SAG HAS F-5E DELIVERIES PENDING, IT COULD
BE VERY HELPFUL IF IT ALLOWED IEG TO PURCHASE THE
AIRCRAFT IN SAG'S STEAD. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT
IEG MAY RAISE THIS ISSUE WITH SAG. BELIEVE IT IS
PREFERABLE FOR THIS MATTER TO BE HANDLED DIRECTLY BETWEEN
IEG AND SAG.

7. IN CONTINUING EFFORT TO AID IEG TO GREATEST
EXTENT POSSIBLE, WE HAVE INCREASED FY 74 FMS CREDIT
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TO DOLS 11 MILLION AND WILL ALLOW CASH PURCHASES OF
UP TO DOLS 25 MILLION. (FYI: IEG IS PUSHING HARD FOR
EVEN GREATER CASH PURCHASES, BUT FINAL USG AGREEMENT
STILL PENDING. END FYI.) SISCO

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